

**GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
 EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS FOR 2007 FISHERIES**

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the three exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications for chilipepper rockfish. The primary focus of the EFP fisheries is to test different gear types—all proposals use troll and/or vertical hook-and-line gear in different areas at comparable depth ranges, and specify maximum amounts of hooks. The purpose of the fisheries is to evaluate the effectiveness of using these gear types in various areas to target chilipepper rockfish while avoiding bycatch of overfished rockfish.

Similar to yellowtail rockfish, chilipepper rockfish is an example of a stock that has not been able to be accessed because of overfished rockfish concerns; as a result, a substantial amount of the optimum yield remains unharvested each year.

Over the past few years, the GMT has received requests to provide targeted trawl and non-trawl chilipepper rockfish fisheries, but the Council has not been able to accommodate these requests because of the estimated bycatch of overfished stocks associated with these fisheries. The data collected through these EFPs could help the Council evaluate future requests for targeted non-trawl chilipepper fisheries.

In June, as part of the 2007-2008 biennial specifications process, the Council adopted the following bycatch caps for overfished rockfish for EFPs in 2007:

Table 1.

Bocaccio	Canary	Cowcod	Darkblotched	Widow	Yelloweye
6.9 mt	0.4 mt	0.1 mt	0.4 mt	3.6 mt	0.1 mt

The proposed caps in the EFP applications are:

Table 2.

	Bocaccio	Canary	Cowcod	Darkbl	Widow	Yelloweye
EFP # 1	3.3 mt	0.2 mt	1 fish	0.4 mt	0.7 mt	1 fish
EFP # 2	7.3 mt	0.4 mt	0.2 mt			0.2 mt
EFP # 3	1.6 mt	0.1 mt	6 fish			6 fish
Total	12.2 mt	0.7 mt	0.2 mt	0.4 mt	0.7 mt	0.2 mt

The GMT recommends that the bycatch caps specified in June for canary, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish remain in place; however, there is residual remaining in the bocaccio estimate to accommodate the proposed increase. As a suggestion, the EFP applicants may wish to have one overall bycatch cap specified for the EFP, and individual caps for each participating vessel. This approach would allow the EFP to continue if one vessel reached its individual cap. Additionally, the GMT recommends that the EFP permits specify that vessels must fish seaward of a line approximating 100 fms to avoid bycatch of canary rockfish, in particular. Both of these

provisions would help ensure that these EFPs are prosecuted for a sufficient amount of time to collect the bycatch data needed to evaluate the bycatch rates of these fisheries.

As the number of participants, size of vessels, and maximum number of hooks is different for each EFP, the GMT believes that each EFP should remain separate. The GMT recommends that the proposed caps for bocaccio, darkblotched, and widow rockfish presented in Table 2 apply. For canary rockfish, a bycatch cap of 110 lbs/vessel for the duration of the EFP would apply, and the following EFP caps would apply for canary, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish:

Table 3.

	Canary	Cowcod	Yelloweye
Att # 1	330 lbs	50 lbs	50 lbs
Att # 2	440 lbs	225 lbs	225 lbs
Att # 3	110 lbs	50 lbs	50 lbs
Total	0.4 mt	0.1 mt	0.1 mt

The GMT recommends that the data from these three EFPs be coordinated through one source, preferably an agency such as California Department of Fish and Game. Additionally, a comparison of results should be provided in a single report to facilitate an effective evaluation the respective viability of the results from each EFP for management.

GMT Recommendations:

1. Approve the three EFP applications for chilipepper rockfish with the following bycatch caps for overfished species:
 - a. For bocaccio, darkblotched, and widow rockfish, use caps in Table 2.
 - b. For canary, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish, use caps in Table 3.
2. Specify individual vessel bycatch cap of 110 lbs/vessel for canary rockfish.
3. Require vessels fishing under each EFP to fish seaward of 100 fms to protect canary rockfish.
4. Consider how data and analysis should be compiled amongst the three EFPs.

PFMC
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